10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

177 797 minds and stimulated their smouldering desires for education so that they could read the Book which had been brought to them by their "Younger White Brother", the 177 missionary. Schools were opened and at the beginning 871 were attended by persons of all ages from young children 797 to ambitious gray-haired men and women.

These schools grew in number and in standard of instruction until, within fifty years of the baptism of the first Karen into the Christian Church, a school of collegiate standing was demanded. For many years it was customary to call the school, which at the time of the invasion was a part of Rangoon University known as Judson College, the "Karen College". In fact, the tramway tickets of the Rangoon Electric and Tramway Company were so printed until after the college was transferred to Kokine when the University moved to its present site.

So great was the desire for schools among the Christian Karens, who presented a marked contrast to their non-Christian neighbours of the same race, that they early met the cost of instruction and, in most cases, of the buildings in which their children were taught. This was especially true in Bassein District. Other centres of Karen education and church activity were Rangoon, where they owned their own extensive mission compound in the Sanchaung quarter, and Moulmein at Daingwunkwin, and in Shwegyin, Henzada, Tavoy and Toungoo. Later Nyaunglebin, Tharrawaddy, Loikaw, Maubin (for Pwos) and Insein became centres of activity and influence.

177 795 The broadening of their mental outlook has brought about many changes in their lives and in their thinking. A number of indigenous cults have arisen as a result of this stimulation. The conflict between their native reli-

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

gious ideas and Buddhism and Christianity has led some to try to make syntheses of these various teachings. So-called "prophets" have tried to set themselves up as leaders in these developments. But none of them has made a very lasting impression on the people as a whole. Of these the Klibopah and the Ko San Ye movements were probably the most important. The remnants of the latter group have their centre in a large village, Padoplaw, near Nyaunglebin. One of the sons of a former leader, Saw Johnson Po Min, led them into an atheistic movement from which came some of those who were of uncertain loyalty at the time of the Japanese invasion. As compared with the large body of Karens who were unitedly loyal to the government and the religion in which they had found strength, they were a very small group.

Many Karens who qualified as teachers left their own homes and went as pioneers to Upper Burma, and to the outlying tribes such as the Chins, Kachins, Shans, Lahus, and Yawyins and, fired with unselfish zeal, have given their lives for what is really missionary work in preaching and teaching these tribes. During the Third Burmese War, when American missionaries had to leave the Kachin country, these Karen teachers stayed on and did effective work in laying the foundations for a new regime among them.

The development of education among the Karens helped to produce books to take the place of the old oral bard literature. In the beginning many of these books were written by the missionaries; but as time went on there grew up Karens who had a desire to contribute to the growth of their people and these have written a number of very acceptable works. In 1841 a newspaper in Karen,

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

177 538 204 called "The Morning Star", was established by Dr. Mas in Tavoy. This was the oldest vernacular newspaper Burma, with a continuous history up to the time i publication was stopped by the Japanese occupatio It was cut off when it was about to celebrate its centenar

177 875 The Karens were carrying on work of researc medical practice, and other scientific branches in whic they were showing real ability. There were Karen le turers in the University.

177 794 871 The churches established by the missionaries ha become self-supporting. No money was being paid fro America for regular church work among the Karens, wit the exception of grants for a few schools and for pionee ing work among outlying tribes. They had their ow associational organizations in which the churches of district were combined and the stronger made contribu tions to help the weaker, to support their Theologic Training School at Insein, to maintain town schools whic were conducted with boarding departments for the benef of the whole district, and to subsidize evangelistic wor in distant places.

177 795 The Baptist churches among the Karens combine with the churches of other peoples in Burma to form th Burma Baptist Convention. Their annual meetings wer often attended by as many as three or four thousand dele gates and were sources of inspiration as well as opportu nities to plan for further work. The Karens shared th honours of president and officers with Burmans and others Among other churches such as the Anglican and Roma Catholic which conducted work among the Karens, the had their conferences and carried on their work accordin to the genius of their own church.

10; Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

The organization of the Baptist churches has been an important factor in developing a sense of responsibility among the Karens and an understanding of the principles of self-government, even though there may still be much for them to learn.

Even a casual observer will notice the great difference between the Karens who have become Christians and those who have either remained in their own animism or even become Buddhists. The difference in the appearance of their villages may not be so striking but officers have often remarked to me that the Christian villagers have a different air, they are a little more cleanly, have their schools and are better clothed. They also have a much lower crime record. Their young people branch out into better positions and become more prosperous.

The villages that remain animistic are still held in the slavery of their taboos and their mentality remains static. The village life remains unchanged. Custom is their master. Progress is considered dangerous. Education is not encouraged. If they do go to school it is to the Buddhist monastery, if there happens to be one. In some cases however ambitious children demand to go to the Christian schools and branch out into progressive ways which they learn there.

During the last quarter century there has been a movement among the animistic Karens who do not become Christian to turn to the Buddhist culture and religion. This is partly due to the movement to make Buddhism the national religion of the country and to try to win all the inhabitants to its practices, and partly due to the fact that the Buddhist culture is superior to the original Karen way of life. In turning away from their ancient

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

177
795 beliefs and practices they take hold of that which is nearest to them. But in so doing, it must be acknowledged, they find themselves still bound by many fears which Buddhism has not enabled them to throw off. What progress has been made has been very slow.

The release of their minds from the thraldom of superstition and from the fear of breaking with old customs of which we have spoken, together with the security from attack afforded them by the British Government have contributed to help the Karens to become one of the most hopeful elements in the population of Burma. They can be counted upon to make good use of the opportunities which it is expected will come to them in the rehabilitation of the country when the present war is over.

Torch stand

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

778 become an object of veneration among the Karen is not difficult to understand in view of the prevalence of animism among Oriental peoples. Other great mountains in the East have been reverenced by the inhabitants of the region round about.

Religious Cults

792 795 Like the Jews, who two thousand years ago were constantly expecting the Messiah and followed after those who set themselves up as such, the Karen seem to have been ever ready to accept the teachings of some self-constituted prophet. Dr. Judson met with a person of this sort north of Moulmein in 1832.[4] The names of a number of these religious teachers, including a few women, are known. The founder of one of these cults, which attained a remarkable vogue and is known as the "Maw Lay," began his labors in the village of Pli hta, which lies about fifty miles north of Shwegyin, where they still point out the original pagoda and the huge stone steps leading up to it, reputed to have been built by the founder of the sect. The teaching was eclectic, as is generally true of other cults of this sort, embracing in this case the "Y'wa" and other traditions of the Karen, together with some elements of Buddhism and some of Christianity. The concluding sentence of the myth concerning the incarnation of the reputed author of this religion relates that when he appeared among the white men he was called Jesus Christ, and that when he appeared among the Karen he was known as "Maw Lay." The new cult originated about the middle of the last century and spread rapidly into almost every district where the Karen are found. At one time its adherents seem to have numbered some thousands, and a few of them still remain. They have a regular form of worship, consisting of a liturgy, hymns, and offerings of food and water.

Later movements of a similar nature, but more influenced by Christianity, have gained a large following chiefly among the non-Christian Karens, to whose national feeling the leaders have undoubtedly appealed. Conspicuous among these religious leaders has been Ko Pisan, also later known as Ko San Ye, who came from Papun or Shewegyin, entered the Baptist Mission, and for some years at the beginning of the present century exercised a considerable influence toward a real religious revival. Later he withdrew from his Baptist connection and started an independent Christian church, which has survived its founder and now has a membership

[4] Dr. Francis Mason, *The Karen Apostle*, p. 94.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

of between six and seven thousand persons. The future development of this movement will be watched with interest for, under the direction of a few trained preachers and others, it affords an excellent opportunity for the Karen to show what they can accomplish in the way of religious progress by themselves.

If they can maintain their ideals, administer the affairs and discipline of their church, and increase its membership, while continuing friendly relations with other Christian bodies in Burma, they will be worthy of all praise.

Contemporaneous with the founding of the independent church by Ko San Ye, a former priest of the Church of England started the "Hkli Bo Pa" cult in the Toungoo Hills, basing his preaching on a misapprehension of a passage of Scripture. He has instituted a form of worship with peculiar practices, has been excommunicated from the Anglican body, and has since been carrying on his labors with only indifferent success.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

789 751 gun at them; but I had one of my native helpers fire the gun, in order to preclude the deduction on the part of the owner of the stones that a foreigner's handling of the gun had prevented the working of the charm. The discharge of the weapon knocked the stones to bits to the great surprise of the owner, who exclaimed repeatedly that the stones were worthless after all. Such decisive demonstrations of the uselessness of magic were, of course, lacking in the olden time, and the failure of a charm to accomplish what was desired could always be explained by some unfavorable circumstance, such as the omission of some necessary rite or the ill-humor of the spirit whose coöperation was necessary. It should be remembered also that the absence of the accustomed charm produces an adverse psychological effect on those depending on them. I am told that both Karen and Burman boys who play football, have a "medicine" to protect them from injury and to bring victory. Without this talisman, which has its counterpart in the mascot of some American baseball and football teams, the players are apt to do poorly and lose the game. In like manner a Karen, who attributes his indisposition to the evil influence of some one who is bewitching him, is likely to become worse through the power of suggestion; just as his fellow-villager, who has placed himself under the protective charms and remedies of the medicine-man, often derives benefit from his own faith in their efficiency.

795 789 791 In some outlying Karen districts there are still persons of both sexes among the Karens who profess to maintain communication with the powers of the invisible world. Of these "wi," so-called, one group has dealings with the powers of evil, while the other looks to "Y'wa," the eternal God, for the revelation of unseen things. The latter group is sometimes designated leaders of religion ("bu hko," heads of the feasts). The prophesies of the deliverance of the Karen from the Burman yoke and of the coming of the white brother were uttered by some of these "wi." The members of the former group are believed to be able to see into hell and to bring evil forces to bear on men. They go into trances and work themselves into a state of frenzy, writhing on the ground and frothing at the mouth until they have received a message. Then they calm down and deliver their oracle in verse. They are reputed to have often deceived their patrons. They are at enmity with the prophets of the second group. Their influence is limited to those of weak "so" or personal powers.[2] Not only have strong-

[2] See Chapter XXI on Religious Conceptions, p. 221.

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

willed persons been able to resist their magic, but also in some instances have put the magic-workers to death. These "wi" are not supposed to be easily persuaded into exercising their sinister influence. It is said that they reserve their offices for the client who has suffered a real injury, or one whose distress is revealed by his tears, or one against whom seven malicious attempts have been made. Usually they are men of high-strung nervous temperament. Occasionally, other persons think themselves possessed of magic power ("pgha pgho") and try to use it for good or ill in influencing their own or some one else's life. However, a casual practitioner of the art must observe proper reticence in regard to such matters, or run the risk of falling into disrepute or of exciting the envy of some more experienced "wi." Many persons living in Karen villages at the present time are usually spoken of not as "wi," but as "k' thi thra" ("medicine-teachers" or doctors). They are very backward about referring to their art.

A class of persons supposed in the early days to be gifted with magical powers, consisted of the orphans and other unfortunates who were driven from the villages and compelled to live by themselves in the jungle.[1] In Karen folk-lore many tales recount episodes in which an orphan exercises his uncanny powers, usually in defense of some weaker person whom he saves or helps to get the better of his foes. One such story tells of a chief whose village had been raided again and again. Having no orphan magician at hand to aid him, he was beaten every time; while the victorious villages were every one of them blessed in having such a champion. The chief, anticipating another raid, sent his daughter away because he had no one else to give in ransom, should he be vanquished again. She ran through the jungle until she fell exhausted, and next morning was found by an orphan, one of seven brothers, near whose hut she had fallen. She related her story to the aged grandmother of the seven, and they were so captivated by her that they determined to aid her father in recovering the bronze drums and other treasure that he had surrendered, in order to save his village from destruction. Before the grandmother would consent to her grandsons' enterprise, she required them to make a trial of their strength. This they did by each catching a tusker elephant in the jungle, grasping him by the fore and hind legs and using him as a huge kind of battering-ram in knocking down a clump of bam-

[1] See pp. 133, 134.